

The History of Spoken Word Poetry

Historical and Cultural Perspectives in Literature

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Grade Level	9th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	120 - 180 minutes
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	2 - 3 class periods
Course	A.P. Language and Composition, A.P. Literature and Composition, American Literature, World Literatu		

Essential Question

What impact does history have on literature? How does literature shape or reflect culture?

Summary

In this lesson, students evaluate the historical and cultural perspectives behind spoken word poetry. Students review several spoken word poems and analyze their historical, cultural, and social connections while studying the history of spoken word poetry. Students then demonstrate and justify their understanding of the concept of spoken word poetry and its influences and perspectives with a creative final product. This is a multimodality lesson, which means it includes face-to-face, online, and hybrid versions of the lesson. The attachments also include a downloadable Common Cartridge file, which can be imported into a Learning Management System (LMS) such as Canvas or eKadence. The cartridge includes interactive student activities and teacher's notes.

Snapshot

Engage

Students respond to questions after watching a spoken word poetry video.

Explore

Students analyze several spoken word poetry videos.

Explain

Students read and discuss The History of Spoken Word Poetry.

Extend

Students evaluate a spoken word poem and make inferences about the poet's perspective and influences.

Evaluate

Students use the Color, Symbol, Image strategy to demonstrate their understanding of the history and influences of spoken word poetry.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

PPV402: Understand point of view in somewhat challenging passages

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 9)

9.3.R.1: Analyze the extent to which historical, cultural, and/or global perspectives affect authors' stylistic choices in grade-level literary and informational texts.

Attachments

- CSI—The History of Spoken Word Poetry - Spanish.pptx
- CSI—The History of Spoken Word Poetry.pptx
- Color Symbol Image Handout—The History of Spoken Word Poetry - Spanish.docx
- Color Symbol Image Handout—The History of Spoken Word Poetry - Spanish.pdf
- Color Symbol Image Handout—The History of Spoken Word Poetry.docx
- Color Symbol Image Handout—The History of Spoken Word Poetry.pdf
- Common Cartridge—The History of Spoken Word Poetry.zip
- Lesson Slides—The History of Spoken Word Poetry.pptx
- Note Catcher—The History of Spoken Word Poetry - Spanish.docx
- Note Catcher—The History of Spoken Word Poetry - Spanish.pdf
- Note Catcher—The History of Spoken Word Poetry.docx
- Note Catcher—The History of Spoken Word Poetry.pdf
- Resource Page—The History of Spoken Word Poetry - Spanish.docx
- Resource Page—The History of Spoken Word Poetry - Spanish.pdf
- Resource Page—The History of Spoken Word Poetry.docx
- Resource Page—The History of Spoken Word Poetry.pdf
- Rubric Color Symbol Image—The History of Spoken Word Poetry - Spanish.docx
- Rubric Color Symbol Image—The History of Spoken Word Poetry - Spanish.pdf
- Rubric Color Symbol Image—The History of Spoken Word Poetry.docx
- Rubric Color Symbol Image—The History of Spoken Word Poetry.pdf

Materials

- Common Cartridge (attached)
- Note Catcher handout (linked; one for each student)
- The History of Spoken Word Poetry Resource Page handout (linked; one for each student)
- Color, Symbol, Image handout (linked; one for each student)
- Color, Symbol, Image Rubric (linked; one for each student)
- Writing paper
- Pencil or pen
- Art supplies (only needed if the Color, Symbol, Image strategy is done by hand)

15 minutes

Engage

In this activity, students watch a spoken word poetry video and answer a couple of questions. They respond to at least two other students to encourage discourse.

Tech Integration: Online Discussion

Create a class discussion post that allows students to add a response and reply to one another. You can facilitate the discussion in an LMS, such as Canvas or eKadence, or create a question in another application, such as Google Classroom or Padlet.

In your post, provide students with a brief overview of the lesson and the procedure to follow, as detailed below.

Communicate the following to students:

Overview: In this first activity, watch a spoken word poetry video by Jonathan Lykesd titled "Perception." As you watch the video, think about why he might have written this and why he decided to perform his poem rather than just write it down.

Next, share the following procedure along with these links:

- Perception by Jonathan Lykesd
- Online Discourse Etiquette

This information may be embedded in an LMS or may be shared in a virtual classroom such as Google Classroom.

Procedure:

1. Watch this video. As you watch the video, keep these questions in mind:
    - Why do you think Mr. Lykesd wrote and performed this poem as spoken word?
    - What in his life might have motivated or influenced him to write it?
2. When you have finished viewing the video, answer the questions from above on the Discussion Board.
3. Read through your classmates' posts. Think about their answers to the questions and respond with at least two original thoughts. Remember, "This is cool," or "Awesome!" are not good examples of constructive comments. Consider what you like about a particular post—or perhaps whether it made you consider a new angle. You could start off your comment with something like, "I really like how you..." or "I agree with what you said about (blank) because..."
4. Remember your online discussion etiquette when commenting. If you need a reminder, here is a short video to help with that.

60 minutes

Explore

In this activity, ask students to watch six spoken word poetry videos. There is mild language in a couple videos, so previewing before assigning may be necessary. As the students watch the video, have them complete a Note Catcher with guiding questions. After viewing the videos, ask students to respond with one interesting thing they noticed and one question they have on a Discussion Board.

Tech Integration: Online Discussion

Create a class Discussion Post that allows students to add a response and reply to one another. You can facilitate the discussion in an LMS, such as Canvas or eKadence, or create a question in another application, such as Google Classroom or Padlet.

Teacher's Note

Students could be assessed for completion of the task. Teachers are encouraged to participate in the Discussion Board in order to facilitate a rich discussion, but that is not required. Check out the Online Discussion - Best Practices to learn more about facilitating effective online discussions.

Communicate the following to students:

Overview: This activity has two parts. First, watch several spoken word poetry videos. As you watch the videos, think about what might have influenced the poets to write their poems. What were their influences? Who are they speaking to? What are they talking about? Consider where their inspiration for their poem came from. Were they influenced by their culture? Society? History? After watching the videos and completing your notes, add your response to the prompts provided to the discussion board. Discuss with your classmates what their thoughts are about the videos.

Next, share the following procedure along with these links:

- Note Catcher
- Alex Dang "What kind of Asian are you?" by Alex Dang
- A Muslim girl and a Jewish girl Washington DC team
- Spoken Word to His Mother by Brandon Leake
- Love you some Indians by Rowie Shebala
- Rise by Amanda Gorman
- To This Day by Shane Koyczan

This information may be embedded in an LMS or may be shared in a virtual classroom such as Google Classroom.

Procedure:

Part 1

1. Open the Note Catcher and print a copy of it.
2. Use the Note Catcher to take notes as you view the following videos. Consider these questions as you complete your Note Catcher:

- Who is the poet speaking to (their audience)?
- What is the subject/topic?
- Is the topic culturally relevant? Historically relevant? Socially relevant? How so? (**Socially relevant** - how people lived, trends, and what people believed at that time;
  Culturally relevant - the arts and popular interests associated with a particular time and place or common experiences (religion, race, geography, ethnicity, etc.);
  Historically relevant - what was happening in the world when the poem was written or other historical events in the past)

3. View each of these videos:

- Alex Dang "What kind of Asian are you?" by Alex Dang
- A Muslim girl and a Jewish girl Washington DC team
- Spoken Word to His Mother by Brandon Leake
- Love you some Indians by Rowie Shebala
- Rise by Amanda Gorman
- To This Day by Shane Koyczan

4. Submit your Note Catcher when you have completed it.

Part 2

1. Using your notes you took from the videos, respond to the following prompts on the Discussion Board:

- What is one interesting thing you wrote in your notes?
- What is one question you have about the videos?

2. Once you have made your post on the Discussion Board, respond to one or two of your classmates' posts. Did they notice the same thing you noticed or did they notice something completely different? Can you answer the question they asked or do you have that same question? Remember your discussion post etiquette rules.

30 minutes

Explain

Have students read a brief History of Spoken Word Poetry. They ask them to tell what the most significant point of the reading was to them using the POMs strategy.

Teacher's Note: Asynchronous Instructions

This task could be used as a formative assessment to gauge student understanding. Teachers are encouraged to participate in the Discussion Board in order to facilitate a rich discussion, but that is not required.

Tech Integration: Online Discussion

Create a class discussion post that enables students to add a response and reply to one another. You can facilitate the discussion in an LMS, such as Canvas or eKadence, or create a question in another application, such as Google Classroom or Padlet.

Optional: Differentiation

If delivering this lesson virtually, consider a synchronous meeting to complete the reading as a Jigsaw activity. This strategy can reduce the stress on lower readers and invite more discussion.

Communicate the following to students:

Overview: Do you know the history of spoken word poetry? Would it surprise you to know it's been around much longer than the internet or even television? In this activity, read a short selection to uncover the beginnings of spoken word and how it has changed over the years. Think about any questions you had from the last activity and determine whether or not they are answered in the reading.

Next, share the following procedure along with this link:

- The History of Spoken Word Poetry Resource Page

This information may be embedded in an LMS or may be shared in a virtual classroom such as Google Classroom.

Procedure:

1. Open The History of Spoken Word Poetry Resource Page file.
2. As you read the short selection, highlight important words or points or take notes in the margins.
3. When you have finished reading, think about the most significant or the most important point you learned about spoken word poetry.
4. Create a discussion post with your most important point. Use these questions to help develop your post:

- What was most significant in the reading that helped you understand the history of spoken word poetry?
- Did anything in the reading answer the question you had in the last activity?

5. Read your classmates' posts and respond to one or two with original comments. Consider what they think is the most important point. Is it the same as yours? Completely different? Did they answer any question you still have? Remember your discussion post etiquette when responding.

30 minutes

Extend

Students choose one of the spoken word poetry videos from earlier in the lesson or a favorite spoken word poem of their own. They are asked to infer what the poet's history or time period, culture, or social issue is from their poem. They are also asked to discuss what might have affected the poet's perspective and why they chose spoken word poetry as a medium of expression.

Teacher's Note

This assignment could be used as formative assessment to address any misconceptions at this point in the lesson, or it could be used in addition to the activity in the next module as part of the summative assessment.

Communicate the following to students:

Overview: In the next activity, you choose one of the spoken word poetry videos from earlier in this lesson or choose another of your favorite spoken word poems. You are then asked to think about what you have learned about spoken word poetry and what you already know from your experience. Finally, you use that information to make an inference and draw a conclusion about the poet's history or the time period, culture, and/or social positioning and what perspective may have influenced their choice of spoken word poetry over other mediums of expression.

Next, share the following procedure with your students. This information may be embedded in an LMS or may be shared in a virtual classroom such as Google Classroom.

Procedure:

1. Choose one of the spoken word poetry videos from earlier in the lesson or choose another favorite poem.
2. Open a new Google Doc and type the title of your poem, the poet's name, and your name.
3. Watch the video and keep these questions in mind:
    - Are there some clues to the poet's culture?
    - Does the poet use any references to history in their poem?
    - What is the social issue the poet is addressing or what does society expect from them?
    - Why do you think the poet chose spoken word poetry over other mediums of expression?
4. When you have finished the video, think about those questions again. Use that information and what you have learned about spoken word poetry to make an inference and draw conclusions to answer the questions. Write 3-5 sentences answering those questions and record that on your Google Doc.
5. Submit your Google Doc when finished.

60 minutes

Evaluate

Assign students to use the Color, Symbol, Image strategy to represent their understanding of spoken word poetry in this activity. Emphasize to them that their choices should reflect what they've learned in the previous activities about the historical, social, and/or cultural perspectives and influences of spoken word poetry. Have students write a brief statement about why they chose each piece.

Student Sample Response

"I chose yellow for my color because it reminds me of a light and spoken word poetry shines a light on topics that are historically swept under the rug. The symbol I chose is the peace symbol. I feel like spoken word poetry is a way to bring all cultures together in peace regardless of their history. The image I chose is a photo of Olympians with their fists in the air at the 1968 Olympics because that represents to me solidarity and bravery. Spoken word artists are very brave to speak out on what they believe even when they are the only ones. Their poetry gives them voice and lets others know they are not alone."

Teacher's Note

When assessing students' CSI submission, consider the explanation behind their choices more than the actual choice of color, symbol, or image. Their explanation should communicate their understanding of the historical, cultural, and/or social connections to spoken word poetry.

Optional: Differentiation

Students could complete this activity by hand drawing their color, symbol, and image, or they may choose to do it using Canva or Google Slides or Draw. If students choose to hand draw the assignment, they should take a picture of it and upload it as a file submission. A rubric has been provided to the students to guide their completion of the assignment.

Communicate the following with students:

Overview: In this final activity, use the Color, Symbol, Image strategy to demonstrate what you have learned about the historical, social, and/or cultural perspectives and influences of spoken word poetry. In this strategy, think about what color might represent the concept of spoken word poetry and then explain your choice. You do the same for a symbol and an image. Your color choice might represent the mood or tone of the concept. A symbol might be something like two lines crossing or a circle or a thumbs up. Think metaphorically when you think about a symbol, but more concretely for an image.

In other words, if I asked you to show me a color, a symbol, and an image for the concept of love, you might choose red for the color because it is typically associated with love. Your symbol might be the shape of a heart because when you love somebody you feel it in your heart and the symbol of a heart is often used to represent love. Your image might be a family having fun at a park or gathering around a new baby, or maybe hugging a grandparent, or a picture of a home because when you think about love you might think about your family, and that is a memory you have when you felt loved. Remember to explain your choice. It must make sense. If you had chosen red for the color of love, but said it was because red is your favorite color of car, you will need more explanation as to why that color represents love. Take your time with this assignment and be creative!

Next, share the following procedure along with these links:

- Color, Symbol, Image rubric
- Color, Symbol, Image handout

This information may be embedded in an LMS or may be shared in a virtual classroom such as Google Classroom.

Procedure:

1. Here is a rubric to help guide the completion of your CSI (Color, Symbol, Image).
2. You can choose how you want to complete this assignment. You could either hand draw the assignment, or you could use this handout to create a digital version of your CSI. If you choose to hand draw the assignment, you will need to take a picture of it and upload it as a file.
3. When you have chosen each piece of the CSI, explain why you chose those to represent your understanding. Remember to consider this question when choosing your color, symbol, and image:
    - What have you learned about the historical, social, and/or cultural perspectives and influences of spoken word poetry?
4. When you have finished your assignment, submit your file.

Resources

- Brown, A., & Otuteye, M. (2018, April 10). *The Bread Loaf School of English toolkit for teaching spoken word & slam poetry.* https://nanopdf.com/download/teaching-slam-poetry_pdf
- Dang, A. (2014, January 29). *What kind of Asian are you? Button Poetry*. [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoP0ox_Jw_w
- Gorman, A. (2020, March 4). *Rise. Vital Voices Global Partnership*. [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdBT9JBV09k
- Inkbottle Press. (n.d.) *History of spoken word poetry*. https://www.inkbottlepress.com/interesting/history-of-spoken-word-poetry.html
- K20 Center. (n.d.). CSI: Color, Symbol, Image. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/161
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- NanoPDF.com. (2018). *Word & slam poetry.* https://nanopdf.com/download/teaching-slam-poetry_pdf
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- Smithsonian Folkways. (n.d.) *Say it loud. African American spoken word*. https://folkways.si.edu/say-loud-african-american-spoken-word/struggle-protest/article/smithsonian
- The Poetry Foundation. (n.d.). *An introduction to the Black arts movement*. https://www.poetryfoundation.org/collections/148936/an-introduction-to-the-black-arts-movement
- Washington D.C. Team. (2013, August 9). *2013 Brave new voices - A Muslim girl and a Jewish girl. Youth speaks*. [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tv00xjClbx0
- Wikipedia. *Griot*. (2021, May 13). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Griot